

tekomp Belgium officially launched



By Birgitta Meex

On 18 April 2013 we launched the new Country Group tekomp Belgium. The foundation event was hosted by the University of Leuven. It was the third successful event that tekomp organized in close cooperation with the Subfaculty of Language and Communication at the Antwerp campus.

About 75 participants took part in this unique event, among them staff and master students from Translation Studies and Multilingual Communication. The full-day conference program offered a good balance between presentations, panels, and networking.

After the welcome address by Prof. Dr. Frieda Steurs, the host and dean of the Subfaculty of Language and Communication, Herbert Herzke,

vice-president and Country Group mentor at tekomp, and Anke Mecklenbrauck, University Relations and Country Group officer at tekomp, provided an overview of the main tasks and goals of tekomp. They invited the members of the Initiative Committee to introduce themselves and witness the official foundation of tekomp Belgium by the Country Group mentor. You can watch the video at

<http://youtu.be/tp-LyoQU190>.

Subsequently, Hans Van Heghe, founder and CEO of the ICMS group, explained how knowledge management is linked to technical communication during a lively presentation. According to Van Heghe the big challenge is JERI®: 'Just Enough Relevant Information, when and where

you need it'. In the next presentation Prof. Dr. Frieda Steurs zoomed in on terminology management as a quality assurance factor for multilingual communication in a global world. Testimonials by two alumni of the Subfaculty of Language and Communication concluded the morning session. Werner Van Scharen, Packaging and Print Professional, and Nico Van Dyck, Editor-in-Chief at dhaxley Translations, who graduated in the 1980s and 1990s respectively, shared their work experiences in technical communication based on their specific linguistic perspective and educational background.

The afternoon session featured two more presentations. Jang Graat, the owner of Jang Communication and an experienced technical author and trainer, demonstrated in a compelling presentation how to 'write less and say more' and how to facilitate users' lives in an era of information overload. In the next presentation, Dr. Michael Fritz, CEO of tekomp and tcworld, gave valuable insights into the current state of technical communication in Europe, focusing on legal and educational standards that have to be met. The day ended with a panel discussion with representatives from industry, academia and the service sector. Current developments and challenges for technical communication in Belgium and the rest of Europe and the role of tekomp therein were addressed and further discussed with the audience.

One of the main objectives of tekomp Belgium is, to bring together and

to connect all interested technical communication professionals in the Flemish, French, and German speaking parts of the country. Since compared to Germany, both the field and profession of technical communication are to date largely unknown and undervalued in Belgium, the aim is to enhance the visibility and recognition of the profession. University-industry collaborations as well as co-operations between Belgian and other European universities may help to raise awareness of the profession among students, graduates, and HR professionals, and convince them of its potential in terms of added value. In particular, such collaborations address the need for education and training as well as for research in technical communication. Eventually, consumer organizations such as Test Aankoop in Flanders and Stiftung Warentest in Germany should also become involved.

In the feedback from the foundation event and the subsequent tcworld Roadshow on 12 June in Antwerp participants have expressed an interest in presentations on specialist topics (one particular suggestion was multimodal technical communication) and in interactive workshop sessions that include business-related hands-on activities. Another idea that came up was that of speed presentations (e.g. 5 minutes), where participants describe current projects and challenges or present well-defined solutions to tackle problems they have met.

This fall tekomp Belgium is planning a joint event with the Flemish association for business communication vvzc on the topic of instructive discourse. We will keep you informed!

Find out more about our upcoming activities on the tekomp Belgium LinkedIn page:

www.linkedin.com/groups/tekomp-Belgium-4825657/about



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